



## **Welcome to the MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant Program!**

We are pleased to offer this grant opportunity to member schools in partnership with our funders—3M Foundation, Schott Foundation and Xcel Energy Foundation. The STEM Grant Program supports the development of learning opportunities for students that:

1. Improve knowledge of science, technology, engineering and/or mathematics concepts—especially in multidisciplinary contexts;
2. Develop STEM skills and practices (e.g., Science and Engineering Practices and 21st Century Skills) as well as their abilities to use materials, tools, and technology to conduct investigations, engage in problem solving, and design solutions;
3. Enhance understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of STEM, the value of STEM skills and knowledge in the workplace, and relevance of STEM to everyday life; and
4. Increase awareness of and interest in post-secondary STEM education and careers.

Descriptions of the STEM projects that have received STEM Grant funding in the past are posted on the [MINNDEPENDENT STEM grant webpage](#). Funded projects range from creatively simple to large and complex. Both approaches—and everything in-between—have provided new and impactful STEM learning opportunities for students in MINNDEPENDENT member schools. The key to a successful grant proposal is to clearly address the goals of the STEM Grant Program in a way that is appropriate for your school and the students it will reach.

MINNDEPENDENT looks forward to receiving your STEM Grant application. Our hope is to provide the funding needed to enhance quality STEM education in your school.

If you have any questions about the Grant Program or the application process, please don't hesitate to contact us. MINNDEPENDENT's STEM Advisory Committee and staff are here to help!

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**MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant Guidelines:  
For projects to be implemented from  
June 2022 to June 2023**

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**Please read these guidelines carefully  
as some details have changed from previous years.**

Visit <https://misf.org/stem-grants/> for all grant program documents and resources.

Please direct any questions about the MINNDEPENDENT grant process to:  
Beth Murphy, STEM Program Manager, [bmurphy@misf.org](mailto:bmurphy@misf.org), 612-270-0194  
or Lisa Vosbeek, Director of Development and Programs, [lvosbeek@misf.org](mailto:lvosbeek@misf.org), 651-424-4930

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## **STEM Grant Types, Eligibility and Number of Awards per School, Post Award Process & Requirements**

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### **STEM Grant Types**

Three types of STEM Grants will be awarded, as described below. Please note that the size and number of awards will be based on total funding available and the degree to which submitted proposals address funding criteria. Members of the MINNDEPENDENT STEM Advisory Committee will review STEM Grant applications with respect to the criteria for each grant type stated below.

### **Eligibility and Number of Awards per School**

All MINNDEPENDENT member schools are eligible to apply for STEM Grants\*, and the proposed project may be for any grade(s) K-12. Preschool STEM projects are not eligible for MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant funding.

Schools may submit multiple grant applications; however, in a given year, a school is only eligible to receive up to one Starter OR one Innovation Grant and one Sustainability Grant. Schools that have received STEM Grants in prior years, including the previous year, are eligible to apply.

**NOTE:** If your STEM Grant project includes building structures, interacting with protected animal or plant species, has safety implications for teachers or students, etc. you must show that you have a plan to comply with any applicable regulations and/or codes.

*\* Only schools that have not received STEM Grant funding in the past are eligible for Starter Grants. In addition, any school that receives a grant and subsequently fails to submit a final report by the deadline (unless an extension has been approved) is ineligible to apply for a STEM grant in the year that immediately follows.*

### **Post-Award Process & Requirements**

- At least one representative of the school is expected to accept their STEM Grant award at the Minnesota Private and Independent Education Awards in April 2022 (date TBD).
- Paperwork received at the Education Awards must be submitted to officially accept the grant award and initiate payment.
- Starter and Sustainability Grants are paid in full upon receipt of paperwork. Innovation Grants are paid in installments (2/3 upon receipt of initial paperwork and 1/3 upon receipt of implementation plan). Implementation plans are due by September 30, 2022.
- Teachers listed on the STEM Grant application are expected to attend the MINNDEPENDENT STEM Education Conference in August 2022 (date TBD).
- All schools that receive STEM Grants are required to submit a final STEM GRANT IMPACT REPORT to MINNDEPENDENT by June 30, 2023. Instructions and a Survey Monkey link for grant reporting will be provided at a later date.

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## Application Questions Common to All Grant Types

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*Note that all Letters of Interest and Grant Applications must be submitted via Survey Monkey. PDF copies of the Survey Monkey forms can be found on the MINNDEPENDENT website for your reference. Because Survey Monkey entries may be lost if your application is not completed in one sitting, we strongly recommend that you prepare your Letter of Interest and Grant Application using word processing software and paste your responses into Survey Monkey when you are ready to submit.*

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION [200 words maximum]**

An overview of your project that includes the grade(s) of students to be served, subject areas covered, overall goal/purpose of project, and how it will benefit STEM education at your school. If your grant is funded, your project description will be published on the MINNDEPENDENT website.

### **OUTCOMES [200 words maximum]**

List up to five student outcomes that you hope to achieve through this project.

### **EVALUATION & ASSESSMENT [200 words maximum]**

Describe information to be gathered that will help you determine if outcomes are achieved.

### **PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES [200 words maximum]**

A high-level work plan for the core activities/steps associated with developing and implementing your project. Include a timeframe and brief description for each activity.

### **ACADEMIC STANDARDS [200 words maximum]**

1. List up to five academic standards that are most relevant to your project (include a one-sentence summary for each standard, not just a reference number).
2. Describe the top three STEM skills and/or practices that your project will help students develop.

### **DIVERSITY & INCLUSION [200 words maximum]**

Address how your proposed project will include strategies and practices to promote engagement, access, and achievement in STEM for all students—especially those from underrepresented and/or underserved groups.

MINNDEPENDENT aims to ensure that all students at member schools have access to high-quality STEM learning experiences. Thus, it is important that projects we fund incorporate research-based strategies and practices to include students from groups that have traditionally experienced achievement, access and/or opportunity gaps in STEM. This includes girls, students of color, low-income students, English language learners, students with learning differences, and students attending school in rural locations.

To assist schools, MINNDEPENDENT has created a document called **Resources for Inclusive STEM Learning** which you can find on the [MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant webpage](#).

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## Types of STEM Grants: Starter Grants

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### Starter Grants — up to \$1,500

Starter Grants are for schools that have not received funding through the MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant Program in the past and are suitable for projects that will launch a STEM education effort at your school. Please note that schools are NOT required to begin with a Starter Grant—schools with well-developed projects are encouraged to consider applying for Innovation Grants.

A Starter Grant will be awarded for acquisition and implementation of curricula and/or educational materials and professional development and teacher stipends are allowed and encouraged expenses. Starter Grant awards will be paid in full upon receipt of the grant agreement by MINNDEPENDENT, by the June 3, 2022 deadline.

### Additional Starter Grant Questions

There are no additional questions for starter grants.

### Starter Grant Scoring Criteria

10 points	Project Description
5 points	Outcomes
5 points	Evaluation & Assessment
10 points	Planning Implementation Activities
5 points	Academic Standards
10 points	Diversity & Inclusion

**45 points total**

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**Types of STEM Grants: Sustainability Grants**

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**Sustainability Grants — up to 20% of original grant, not to exceed \$1,500**

Schools may request a Sustainability Grant to provide additional funding for consumable materials needed to continue a STEM project that has previously received funding through the MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant Program. A Sustainability Grant may be requested for up to 20% of the original grant award. Schools are eligible to receive one Sustainability Grant per original funded grant. Awarded grants will be paid in full upon receipt of the grant agreement, by June 3, 2022. Schools may only apply for one Sustainability Grant per year.

**Additional Sustainability Grant Questions****PAST PROJECT SUCCESSES [200 words maximum]**

Describe the successes of your prior STEM Grant project and evidence to support these claims, especially in terms of the impact it has had on teaching and learning.

**SUSTAINABILITY [100 words maximum]**

How funding of this project supports your school's long-term goals for STEM teaching and learning.

**Sustainability Grant Scoring Criteria**

10 points	Project Description
5 points	Outcomes
5 points	Evaluation & Assessment
10 points	Planning Implementation Activities
10 points	Diversity & Inclusion
5 points	Past Project Successes
5 points	Sustainability

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**50 points total**

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## Types of STEM Grants: Innovation Grants

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### Innovation Grants — up to \$5,000

Innovation Grants will be awarded for projects that:

- Develop **authentic STEM learning opportunities** using an engineering design and/or scientific discovery framework. Multidisciplinary projects are encouraged.
- Are designed to **expand and improve their school's STEM offerings**.
- Align with relevant **academic standards** and **STEM skills**.
- Incorporate **formative and/or summative assessment or other form of program evaluation** to guide real-time project implementation, measure project success, and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Recognize the importance of **teacher professional development** by including training, mentoring, and/or summer stipends for teacher planning and development.
- Make **authentic and relevant connections** between STEM learning in school and the world beyond.
- Lay a **foundation for continuation, growth, improvement, and sustainability** of the proposed program.
- Are a **team effort of two or more teachers**, either from the same school or multiple schools. If the project involves more than one MINNDEPENDENT member school, collaborating schools may apply jointly for a single grant, or submit separate linked grants. [If proposing a multi-school project, please contact the STEM Program Manager before the deadline to discuss your project.]
- Build **meaningful community partnerships** between schools and community organizations, such as nonprofits, higher education, other K-12 schools, STEM professionals, and/or businesses. Innovation Grant applications must include a **Letter of Commitment** from at least one community partner.

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**Types of STEM Grants: Innovation Grants, continued**

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**Additional Innovation Grant Questions****CROSS-DISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS [100 words maximum]**

Describe how this project makes connections between science, technology, engineering and/or math or with other disciplines (for example: language arts, creative arts, social studies, religion, etc.).

**CONNECTIONS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM [200 words maximum]**

Describe how this project helps students make connections to their own lives, their communities, and/or the world, including STEM careers and post-secondary educational opportunities--as developmentally appropriate for the age of students involved.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERS [100 words maximum]**

List your community partner(s) and the role(s) they play in your project. Innovation Grant applications also require a **Letter of Commitment** from at least one community partner. High quality letters of commitment should be no longer than one page and clearly articulate one or more of the following:

- Who the partner is and the business/organization they represent.
- How and to what degree the partner will support and collaborate with you/your school.
- Why they think the project is important and why they are interested in being part of it.
- What expertise, resources, or commitment they bring to the project.

**Innovation Grant Scoring Criteria**

10 points	Project Description
5 points	Outcomes
5 points	Evaluation & Assessment
10 points	Planning Implementation Activities
5 points	Academic Standards
10 points	Improvement & Sustainability
10 points	Diversity & Inclusion
5 points	Cross Disciplinary Connections
5 points	Connections Outside the Classroom
5 points	Community Partners, including Letter of Commitment

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**70 points total**



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## Use of Funds: How STEM Grant Funds May [and May Not] Be Used

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Grant funds must be used between the time of grant award and June 3, 2023 unless an extension or alternate plan is approved. Any funds not spent by this date must be returned by June 30, 2023.

### Funds May Be Used for:

- **EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS & SUPPLIES.**
  - **Non-consumable materials** such as tools, lab equipment or similar items that are not for one-time use. Any equipment that is of significant cost must be clearly justified as essential to the proposed project. Computer software, lab equipment, or maker space equipment directly relevant to the project may be included. Requests for non-consumable materials are typically made for Starter and Innovation Grants, in some cases, non-consumable materials may be justified for Sustainability Grants (for example additional sets of tools or curriculum materials to scale up a previously funded project).
  - **Consumable supplies** may be included, up to 20% of the total request for Starter and Innovation Grants. Sustainability Grants are often used to cover costs of consumable or replacement materials necessary to continue and improve a previously funded project.
- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** for teachers to develop instructional expertise, acquire knowledge or skills, or further their understanding in ways that are directly relevant to the project are strongly encouraged. Stipends may be included for one or more teachers to plan and develop STEM projects as well as fees for relevant workshops and other learning opportunities. Stipends awarded through STEM grants are paid at a rate of \$25/hour and may not exceed \$750 per teacher. Professional development is allowed for Sustainability Grants only in cases that relate to sustaining the original project, as opposed to extending it beyond its original scope. **Funds will be considered for registration fees for teachers to attend a conference, training, or workshop only if it is directly related to the proposed project (fees to attend general STEM-related conferences are not allowed).**

### Grant funds may not be used for:

- General-purpose expenditures such as technology (general-use computers or tablets, projectors, smart boards, etc.) and furniture (such as desks, shelving, and general-use storage systems).
- Field trip, camp, or competition expenses for students, e.g., program or registration fees, tuition, room and board, and/or transportation.
- Fees or stipends for guest speakers, chaperones, etc.
- Expenses typically part of a school budget, such as teacher salaries or building renovations.
- Transportation, lodging, meals, car rental and other travel expenses for teachers to attend conferences, workshops, seminars, etc.
- Fees for residencies or programs offered by museums or other organizations UNLESS they also include a teacher professional development component.
- Registration fees to attend the MINNDEPENDENT STEM Education Conference.

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## How to Apply

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Note that all Letters of Interest and Grant Applications must be submitted via Survey Monkey. PDF copies of the Survey Monkey forms can be found on the [MINNDEPENDENT STEM grant webpage](#) for your reference, and Grant Application questions for each type of grant are also included in the descriptions of each grant type, above. It is strongly recommended that you prepare your answers to the Letter of Interest and Grant Application questions in advance using word processing software and copy and paste your answers into Survey Monkey when you are ready to submit.

### **Letter of Interest — Due Tuesday, January 11, 2022 by 6pm**

Each school that intends to submit a STEM Grant Application must submit a Letter of Interest describing the preliminary project concept and plan. The Letter of Interest must be completed online and is available at the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MRV3S39>

### **Grant Application — Due Tuesday, February 15, 2022 by 6pm**

Each grant application must include a completed cover sheet and a project budget in addition to the questions listed above. Innovation Grant applications also require at least one Letter of Commitment from a community partner. The MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant application can be found here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MF5Z7W8>

### **STEM Grant Guidelines, Application Forms and Other Information**

The following information is available on the [MINNDEPENDENT STEM grant webpage](#):

- STEM Grant Calendar
- STEM Grant Letter of Interest PDF & Survey Monkey Link
- STEM Grant Application PDFs for Grant Applications & Survey Monkey Link
- STEM Grant Budget Form
- Academic Standards & STEM Resource List
- Resources for Inclusive STEM Learning
- Reference List of Academic Standards
- Project descriptions for previously awarded STEM Grants

**Letters of Interest & Grant Applications must be submitted via Survey Monkey.**

<p>Please direct any questions about the MINNDEPENDENT grant process to: Beth Murphy, STEM Program Manager, <a href="mailto:bmurphy@misf.org">bmurphy@misf.org</a>, 612-270-0194 or Lisa Vosbeek, Director of Development and Programs, <a href="mailto:lvosbeek@misf.org">lvosbeek@misf.org</a>, 651-424-4930</p>
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